IENTURE

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Are We Stuck With the Status Quo . . .
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Spring 1953

TO THE READER:

Contributors to "Venture" can receive more than the grateful thanks of the editors; at least three of them will receive prizes.

Two $20 prizes will be awarded at the Awards Convocation, June 5, by the Joyce Memorial Fund. One written piece, either a story, article or poem will be selected from each issue of "Venture" by a three-man committee. Serving on the committee are E. L. Marvin, Professor of Philosophy; Robert Prins, Instructor of English; and Robert Struckman, Asst. Prof. of Journalism.

The other award of $5 will be given to the artist who has contributed the best illustration to this spring issue of "Venture." Those on the committee to select the winner are Aden F. Arnold, Professor of Fine Arts; Bernard Heringman, Instructor of English; and Mrs. Henry Larom, visiting Instructor of Crafts at MSU.

Speaking of returns in the field of writing, those who read as well as those who write can profit this summer by attending the Writer's Conference from July 20 to July 25. Among the professional writers who will lecture on several kinds of writing are Walter Van Tilburg Clark, author of "The Oxbow Incident" and "The Track of the Cat"; Pulitzer prize winner, Allan Nevins; and the widely published magazine writer, Richard Neuberger.

Mr. Clark will discuss the novel and the short story; Mr. Nevins, biography and history; and Mr. Neuberger, subject matter and technique. No less than nine other professional writers will lecture or lead discussions on gathering material, on poetry; on television, and on writing for children. Further information may be had by calling the University News Service or Mr. Henry V. Larom.

H. Lenhart.

VENTURE

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MISSOULIAN

A FACULTY NOTE

As a writer with a magnificent collection of rejection slips, I would like to say a sympathetic word to those who have kindly submitted work to "Venture" and have been turned down. Your manuscript was read carefully by the Board and by the Faculty Advisor. It was discussed and turned down for any one of a number of reasons such as the following:

1. You had a good idea, but because you have not done much writing, it is not well expressed. By next year, after more practice, your work will probably be accepted.

2. It was a good piece, but needed rewriting. We just don't have the time to work it over with you — and maybe you don't either.

3. Subject matter unacceptable. This can be for a variety of reasons. Perhaps, in the opinion of the board, the subject simply will not interest any group on the campus. Perhaps it is too technical for a general magazine. Or something in it may be libelous. Or maybe it is—how do you say it?—vulgar or morally off-beat in some peculiar way. We do not want to make a timid "Venture"; nor do we want to be barred from the United States Mails. Therefore, we try to follow the standards used by "quality" national magazines. And like them, we sometimes have to turn down good stuff.

However, we do believe, after reading many thousand words of copy, that the "Venture" is worthwhile and is beginning to reflect the best campus thinking. We also believe that there is much to do—much experimenting with covers, art, layout, type and, above all, writing. We will need your support and your work to do it. So stay with us. . . .

. . . Now where is that manuscript of mine that just bounced back from. . . .

—H. V. LAROM,
Faculty Adviser.

ABOUT OUR ARTISTS

Two newcomers joined two veteran "Venture" illustrators to give the second issue of "Venture" artistic appeal.

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DELBERT MULKEY, a junior in journalism, submitted the pictures appearing on pages 4, 5, 11, 14, 24, 25, and 30. Mr. Mulkey is fram Aberdeen, Washington.

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Fine arts major WILMA SMITH, from Polson, Montana, designed the engrossing cover for this issue. She is a sophomore.

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Veteran JEAN STEPHENS, freshman fine arts major, is from Great Falls, Montana. Continuing to use her energies to brighten the all campus magazine, she contributed the pictures which appear on pages 3, 10, 17.

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Co-art editor RICHARD CRIST, from Missoula, drew the pictures appearing on pages 8, 9, 13, and 19. He is a sophomore majoring in business administration.

The Road Home

by **PATRICK CURRAN**

Mr. Curran who is from Minneapolis, Minnesota, is a junior in health and physical education. He is a member of the varsity basketball squad.

TO ONE who has spent many of the hours of youth in purging the wanderlust, there invariably attaches conflicting feelings of nostalgia at the thought of the homeward journey.

In the summer of 1950 the writer determined to leave the small western college where he had first sought to acquire that elusive facet of modern life known as a "higher education." Throughout the last week of final examinations, every moment spared from the demands of studies and the preparations for the long trek home was absorbed in the mental recapitulation and hoarding of the memorable remnants of that brief phase of life encompassed in the previous two years. The serenity of a deserted corridor in the late afternoon; the resonance of the chapel bell heard from the lake farther up the valley; the torn cards and programs littering the swiftly deserted stands; the short walk through Golden Gate Park after the game, as the howling mob of the early afternoon becomes a swarming throng, dispersing itself in the oblique rays of the late autumn sun; the drive across the Bay Bridge as the fog is lifting, seeing the city of pageantry rise high in the turquoise of the evening sky, impaling the ocean-born clouds on its towers; the hushed tension of an examination classroom as the monitor clears his throat and rustles his sheaf, the late-inspired students awaiting with trepedition the knell of his call for papers—and the farewells. The farewells said to those of only fleeting awareness, hasty and embarrassed, which leave the departing one with a vague unrest, wondering if the indifference is of his own breeding, if perhaps on some chance encounter he has not strangled a greeting with an averted eye or chilled the genial offer of a smile with a forbidding glance, and thus, like an unsuspecting tiller, turned his plow away from a field which might well have been fertile. The farewells to those of light and easy camaraderie, as easily parted with as they were met, a casual slap on the back and a good wish dispatching the obligation with much the same regret that a small boy savors the last of his ice cream soda. The goodbyes to the meagre few, the "close friends," to whom one feebly promises "to write," burying his fierce admiration and desperate benedictions beneath the fear of being too "sentimental," meanwhile conjecturing to himself if he will ever see them again — as a shadow in a drafty vestibule on a crowded night train, an arresting snatch of color in a dimmed auditorium, or an instinctive, paralyzing recognition at a boisterous mid-day intersection.

EVEN after the oft-postponed time of departure has come, the leavetaker persists in his search for souvenirs of a present which is soon to be irrevocably committed to the

past. The long, intense gaze over the shoulder, as the car leaves the entrance gate, greedily devours the last fleeing view. The eucalyptus tree, visible at the end of a long corridor-like patio; the deserted navy preflight building, standing off in a remote corner of the campus like a pariah amidst the gleaming white of the Spanish-California architecture; the dairy herd of a local farmer, wandering aimless and apparently befuddled on a distant hill behind the campus—all are fervently and minutely ingrained into the memory.

The grey mood continues as the automobile flashes through a succession of small towns on the highway north to Donner Summit and Reno. The landmarks of previous trips, Vacaville, Napa, Fairfield, and Roseville, anonymous satellite communities, owing their existence to the sweat and industry of the surrounding fruitgrowers and the benign indulgence of the mother metropolis, all are obliterated by the errant eye of the mind still leaping backward with ever-increasing bounds as the wheels, spinning steadily over the twisting concrete carpet, carry one closer to the old familiar orbit of family, high school friends, and lakeshore picnics.

Reno is reached under the slate sky of early morning. The concrete band has become a strip of asphalt, bisecting the visual world of sterile alkali and barren summits. The pattern is spasmodically interrupted by the dilapidated mining villages, cadavers of a former grandeur, interspersed along U. S. 50 like a scattered troop of stragglers, who, having lost the vigor of a younger age, have now crept up to the baked asphalt to seek nourishment from the modern world.

IT IS somewhere on the fringe of this region of desolation and dust, or in the blue, cloud-set mesas of Utah and Colorado, that the traveler first becomes acutely aware of his environment. The mind begins to register and catalogue incidents which up till then had been denied recognition. The coquettish, backward glance of a local hoyden, observed while waiting for a filling station attendant in a rural hamlet. The blase nonchalance of sheepherders, driving their flock up the highway, oblivious of the presence of the mechanical monster or the sound of its horn. The shiny dungarees of a young hitchhiker, embarked on an expedition to the home of his uncle some two hundred miles distant. Every turn in the road, every onrushing hill, each obscure little village is a radiant new experience to his eager vision. The sight of Denver from the "high line," reaching out with its vortex of light to rescue the myriad beams of transient automobiles, which swarm toward its shelter like migratory birds seeking sanctuary from the primitive elements of the night and the mountains.

On through Nebraska and its perpetual circle of prairie, scorched by the humidity of the midwestern sun, and the scalding downpour of the summer thunder showers. The traveler's spirits are now fully rejuvenated and his senses greet each succeeding circumstance with a relish as his mind completely revolves and focuses on the future. The pungent aroma of bacon frying on a skillet in a truck stop in North Platte renews the zest of an early morning appetite. He is strongly impressed by the morbid sight of a demolished motorcycle on the road into Kearney, its two riders lying underneath a blanket on the naked pavement with two ambulance attendants bending over them, tense and motionless as they await the specter which they know is hovering on the sultry breeze. As the automobile drifts

through Omaha, the throbbing purr of the diesels and switch engines mingles with the panting exertions of the steam-driven locomotives to inform the visitor that here the railroad is sovereign, holding the scepter of industry in an interlocking dynasty of twin rails. The smoke and smell and sound of the iron horse are everywhere, enveloping and permeating the atmosphere, leaving their traces on the walls of buildings, at street crossings, and out across the plains.

ACROSS Iowa's undulating escarpment, and the traveler feels a growing surge of anticipation as the fibers of his curiosity reach out before him and endeavor to visualize the journey's end. He wonders if the ebullience of a young nephew has yet been curbed by a schoolboy brawl. If the electric clock in the kitchen is still deliberately set fifteen minutes ahead of time, a concession to the family's collective neurosis of self-delusion. Do the antiquated rain gutter, the peeling paint on the back porch, and the crack in the fireplace still remain as monuments to the waning energy of a father at last succumbing to the encroachments of his seventy years. The images fall in rapid succession, in a disorganized, kaleidoscopic pattern.

As the wheels of the car turn north out of Winona on the highway along the Mississippi bluffs, tranquil in the gossamer blue haze overhanging the river, the pressure on the accelerator keeps pace with the increasing tempo of the traveler's anticipation. Lake Pepin, Wabasha, Frontenac, Red Wing, and other nuclei of the agricultural populace, lying under the broad sweep of the Mississippi's majestic panorama, whirl past the car windows almost unnoticed. As the returning one encounters the first traffic signal near Lake Calhoun, and cruises down Lake Street to Hennepin Avenue, he abruptly becomes aware that the passage has ended, the cycle has completed itself, and an interlude in his life has been claimed by the past.

TRY THIS ONE

Try this one for size said she
Who me?
Yes you said she.
It's too big for me
Oh no, said she
Turn it a bit and see
Its wrong for me
No said she
It won't fit, see
Put it on backwards and see
It doesn't look nice on me
Well, turn it some more and see
It can't be
Turn it inside out and see
It's not right for me
It's a good color, see
But not for me
Try it again for me
It's no use said she
The hat's too little
Said she.

by **Yvonne Lenmark**

A poem by Miss Lenmark from Minneapolis, Minn., who is a junior majoring in journalism.

What Is Happening To Our Convictions

by **DONALD CAMERON**

IF I WERE to announce to you that my four years of college education have almost robbed me of my convictions and have nearly killed my idealism, you probably would answer: "Don't try to be funny," or, "Are you really serious?" As a matter of fact, I am not trying to be funny. And I do mean to be serious.

Four years ago when many of my friends and I entered college, we possessed what could be considered fairly sound attitudes toward life. For example, one of my friends vowed that if ever he had an opportunity to stamp out the crime and corruption which scandalized American politics he would give his full energies to such a crusade. For him a college education appeared as an opportunity for preparing himself for a career of clean politics and crime busting. Another of my friends who was particularly shocked by the apparent poverty in which many of our people lived, vowed that his life would be devoted to social welfare and doing good for others. As college freshmen we still remembered the admonition of our high school commencement speaker who declared that the greatest joys in life come not from the spirit of self interest but from a spirit of service. As for myself, I planned to be a teacher because teaching was an honorable profession in which a man or woman could render real service to his fellow-man.

BUT TODAY, as I and my friends prepare to graduate from college, I observe that my crime-busting friend has majored in Business Administration and has visions now of making a million dollars. My social-welfare friend is no longer interested in helping the poor. And what about me? I wonder if I have not made a mistake by preparing to be a high school teacher. Perhaps I should use my major in Speech and my minor in Mathematics to be a salesman, a statistician or a business man. At least the financial remuneration would be higher. And even the social prestige of a successful businessman is above that of a successful teacher. As my friends and I approach graduation day at our respective colleges, I am forced to look back on my freshman days and ask: "What Is Happening to Our Convictions?"

The easiest way to answer my question is to blame our present attitudes of self-interest upon the spirit of the times. It is the "other fellow" who forces us to take care of our selfish selves first and our more unfortunate brothers last. For example, last fall when Montana potato growers were being paid $1.44 per bushel for their potatoes, and Idaho potato growers were being paid $1.88 per bushel for similar potatoes, the Montana potato grower used his good old constitutional right to force the Department of Agriculture to raise the parity price on his potatoes to the same parity price that the Idaho potato growers received. Also, when the Korean War required the drafting of more men into the American armed forces, the American Parent-Teachers Associations opposed a universal military training bill, while the Amer-

This article is revised from a speech which won first place for Mr. Cameron in the Aber Oratorical contest and in the State Oratorical contest at Bozeman. Mr. Cameron who is from Miles City, Montana and who is a senior in speech is the former business manager of ASMSU.

ican Legion supported the bill. The attitude toward our armed forces is, "Let someone else defend our country, but not me."

IN OUR national politics we are more interested in getting some large money-spending Federal project for our home than we are in getting good government. For example, coast towns demand more money for harbor improvements. River towns demand more money for dredging rivers. Other towns beg for federal airports, federal offices, federal warehouses, federal highways, federal hospitals, federal power dams, and other federal projects. How long are we going to continue this attitude of getting all we can get financially out of our government regardless of its consequences upon our security and economy? Or perhaps as long as we can make a few extra dollars, maybe we don't care what is happening to our convictions. Yes, as college students we might easily blame our self-interest and our apathy upon "the spirit of the times."

Perhaps the "spirit of the times" has been partly responsible for the average American today losing his convictions. But as college students, have we been involved directly with such problems as parity prices for potatoes, and the clamor for federal projects in our home town? Or have we been more concerned with college athletic contests, college newspapers, college social life, and the college grade curve? I should like to contend that if we, as college students, have lost our convictions, we have lost them because of the nature of our college training and not merely because of "the spirit of the times."

AN AREA of college activity where individual initiative and imagination are declining is intercollegiate athletics. A typical situation developed last year during the annual football clash between Yale and Dartmouth. It had been a close, hard-fought game and toward the end of the fourth quarter Yale Quarterback, Dale Montgomery, was directing his team in a drive that could win the game for old Eli. Suddenly, after three unsuccessful plays, Montgomery found himself faced with a fourth down and eight yards to go deep in Dartmouth territory. Automatically, he looked to the bench for instructions. Coach Hickman signalled a play that Montgomery knew would not gain the necessary yardage. But he called the play, lost the ball on downs and also lost the ball game. Why had Montgomery looked toward the bench? Because he was ordered to do so before he took the field. Why did Coach Hickman order a play that did not work? Because his spotters in the stands, with whom he was in telephone contact, had told him that it should work. Whether the play worked or not is immaterial, but it is a sad commentary on modern collegiate football that the individual players are no longer their own masters of the game.

In our college publications we observe widespread conformity to convention and conciliation. During the last academic year, no fewer than seventeen college newspaper editors were released from their jobs because of statements they made in their papers. The statements were considered too controversial to be found in a campus publication. Today a successful editor on a modern campus is one who is able to evade every controversial issue and still fool his readers into thinking they are absorbing the thoughts of a free press. How long will our college students continue to reconcile themselves to this nullification of free thought? Or maybe as long as we can enjoy the comics and the society page we don't want to read anything that might make us think a little bit! I ask: "What has happened to our convictions?"

IN THIS year, 1953, the average college student cannot be classified as typical unless he is a member of at least a half-dozen clubs and organizations, ranging all the way from social clubs and pep committees to dancing classes and religious groups. Let it be granted that all the social graces he gains from these associations are profitable. But it is obvious to all of us that to be considered a good member of any organization, one must adopt whatever beliefs are for the betterment of the group. If perchance you place your personal ideas first, and they conflict with the

interests of the group, then you are considered a radical.

Modern college social fraternities were founded for the purpose of providing companionship and good-fellowship among students attending college. But too many fraternities today have gone overboard in behalf of expensive dinner dances, fear-inducing hell weeks, and palatial residences. And too often today the fraternity man who refuses to get a "crew cut" with the rest of the brothers, or who questions going out for a beer, becomes known as a square, a jerk, or a schmoo. Perhaps when we join so many collegiate groups and conform to their multitudinous regulations, we are like the proud peacock who had such beautiful feathers that he sold one every day for a handsome price. All went well until eventually the pompous bird had sold so many feathers that he could no longer fly. Are we as college students sacrificing our initiative, our imagination and our intelligence by surrendering to the conformities of college social groups? Are we, like the bird, forfeiting our independence for the pleasures of social recognition? If we are, then may God help us for what is happening to our convictions!

If the American college man today is losing his convictions, at least it is comforting to know that in former generations the college man was the epitome of independence and fortitude.

YEARS ago, when Ernie Herschenbreiner was an All-American gridiron star for Yale, he didn't have to look towards his coach for signals about the next play. And his coach didn't send Ernie into the game because a television movie director told him that they needed a pass play next. Ernie was great because he could direct his team under pressure and because he could outsmart anybody on the field. Ernie learned to think for himself, and by so doing he developed the manly qualities of initiative, imagination, and independence.

In June of 1868, President Andrew Johnson was on a barn-storming tour throughout the country seeking re-election to the highest office in our nation. As he passed through a small town in his home state of Tennessee, someone handed him a copy of a school paper. In headlines across the front of this paper were remarks accusing him of immoralites. President Johnson promptly stopped the train, called a general meeting in the streets, refuted the contentions put forth in the school paper and then commended these editors for their courage in printing what they thought was important.

THE HISTORY of the world has proven that no nation is greater than the quality of the men and women who compose it. The democracy of ancient Greece developed and flourished upon the philosophy and teachings of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Demosthenes. But when the people and the leaders of Ancient Greece became more interested in luxury than in government, their city states were conquered and their culture was absorbed by the barbarian Macedonians. As long as the ancient Romans devoted their attentions to constructive pursuits their culture too developed under the guidance of Cicero, Quintilian, and Cato. But as soon as the eyes of the Romans became fixed upon money and power they became over-run by barbaric tribes from the north.

The United States of America reached its present pre-eminence in the world by virtue of the devotions of such men as Washington and Lincoln and even Ernie Herschenbreiner, to the causes of national independence, personal independence, and intellectual independence. If our nation remains great our people will emulate those qualities of character that made our leaders great. But if we lose our love of liberty and if we compromise our convictions for the delusions of the easy, comfortable, luxurious life, then our nation too, like ancient Greece and Rome, will decay into depravity.

If you are concerned as I am over the future of our democracy, then I ask you to consider with me: "What Is Happening to Our Convictions?"

An Important Day

A story by Miss Schilling who is a sophomore majoring in English from Missoula.

by **JEANENE SCHILLING**

ONLY an hour and a half. Only ninety minutes. Ninety minutes and he and Jimmy would wait at the corner until they and rest of the cub scouts were picked up. Only 105 minutes and they would be at the round-house. He could feel the steam, smell the oil and the heat, see the big black engines, hear the roar of the 4:30 freight as it came down the tracks, see the smiling engineer, wave. . . .

An abrupt tickle of laughter snapped him back to his surroundings. He glanced around, only half saw the cracked blackboard, the flag in the corner, the scrawlings tacked up on the walls, the rows of desks dominated by the large one at the front of the room. His reflection in the grime-covered window stared back at him, making him straighten in his seat, conscious of his new blue and yellow uniform. He realized the teacher was talking to his section and disinterestedly turned his attention to her. Half-obscured by her ample, dowdy form appeared the chalked-in square labeled "Detention." It was blank, for a change, and he wondered, idly, what she did when she had no one staying after school. He supposed she had to clean the erasers herself. Her dull voice droned on, explaining the new lesson. He forced himself to look at her again, and giggled inwardly at the thought of her cleaning them, enveloped in clouds of chalk dust, head turned sideways, trying to escape from the smothering feeling as the dust exploded from the erasers.

He felt a sly jab from Jimmy and saw that Miss Simpson was walking down the aisle. He hurriedly grabbed his book, flicked it open, and began writing. She passed his desk, and his eyes and Jimmy's met in mutual relief. With a sigh, he laid down his pencil and gazed about him. Outside, the sky was clean and clear. The few branches visible above the cut-out of a shamrock on the window were beginning to bud, and a bird was perched on a swaying branch, dozing in the cool warmth of the brightness.

He watched the bird a moment, wondering how birds felt about trains, and his thoughts drifted again to the long anticipated trip. Perhaps they could ride in one of the engines. He knew an engineer who had said that some day he could ride from the round-house to the shed. (Maybe he'd better remind him of that promise.) He imagined himself climbing into the big black engine and waiting until the fireman got the fire going good. Again he could almost feel the heat of the fire on his face. Then the lurch as the engine began to move, going out of the round-house and into the bright sunshine and maze of tracks, past the signal lights, faster, faster, blowing its whistle as they turned the bend. . . .

Suddenly rough hands jerked him from his seat and bounced him onto his feet. Hard, hard, harsh words—words—words—words-wordswords! He clenched his fists tightly,

his nails digging painfully into his palms, in an effort to keep his hands from flying up to protect his ears. . . .

"And if you can't pay attention during school hours, you will have to stay afterwards, . . ." and the long tirade was ended.

The hands released him and he slunk back into the comforting familiarity of his seat, his face burning from the sting of her words. He glanced up furtively and glimpsed the bird still dozing on the swaying branch. Suddenly, as he watched, the bird woke, chirped, and flew off. The complete freedom of the act seemed to be mocking him and his imprisonment. Stubbornly, he shut his eyes against the hot tears, his palms ached where his nails had pressed into the flesh, and a single refrain echoed through his mind like the click-clack of train wheels: I'll miss the trains, I'll miss the trains, I'll miss the trains. . . .

Later, through chalk dust, he saw the den leader's car driving past on the way to the round-house. The shrill voices of excited boys were half obliterated by the dull impact of eraser against eraser. The chalk dust was forming a heavy cement with the tears in his eyes. He hurriedly finished the remaining erasers and took them into the almost vacant classroom. And he carried them out again, the admonishment still ringing in his ears. This time, he pretended they were Miss Simpson, making each thud an expression of his disappointment and resentment. Thud, thud,—his face almost fiendish in his imagined revenge.

Hours later, it seemed to him, he was finally released. He walked down the empty hall and out into the deserted school-yard. His fury had accomplished nothing, except an extra good job of cleaning the erasers, for which he had been rewarded with a condescending compliment from Miss Simpson. The deep hurt remained, twisting and turning inside him, his agony reflected in the droop of his mouth, the listless swing of his arms as his feet dragged him over the familiar short-cuts. He picked up a branch and began absently to swish clouds of dust up around his feet. The rising swirls reminded him of billows of chalk dust, and the stifling feeling he had experienced as he watched the other boys riding off to the trains returned, choking him. At the end of the alley, he threw the now leafless branch from him and methodically disarranged a neat pile of stones near a garbage can, then paused a moment, and brushed the dust from his blue and yellow uniform. In the distance, he heard the soft shrillness of a train whistle. A branch rustled above him and he saw a very young bird gaily preening itself in the full joyousness of spring. He hurled the stone, wishing it was Miss Simpson in the tree. The bird fell. He walked to the inert form on the ground and picked up the warm little body, sorry for his cruelty. The bird was gone, but Miss Simpson would be at school tomorrow and the next day and the next. He suddenly felt sick. He looked down at the soft weight in his hands, and gently ran his finger along the length of the dead bird.

Before serving in the army for two years, Mr. Driscoll attended Montana State University as a business administration major. He is now majoring in pre-medical technology. He is from Missoula.

The Fonder Heart

by **JACK DRISCOLL**

It was a warm night. The tall, thin man was striding resolutely down El Paso Street, apparently oblivious of the heat. Rather, it seemed to stimulate him as his long legs carried him by the ragged, 19th century store fronts and the dirty, poor people who wandered listlessly down the street. He scarcely noticed the squalid atmosphere as his mind raced along with his hurried pace. It had been a long time.

"It seems like only yesterday," he thought to himself, "and yet, it'll be eight years in July since that last night in Juarez."

They had been going overseas the next morning. He had never forgotten the way he and his buddies had strutted across the bridge that night. They had been proud of the patch on their shoulders, proud of the sharp looking uniform they were wearing, of the gleaming brass and the polished shoes. They had plenty of money in their pockets, for soldiers anyway, and this was to be their last night before shipping out.

He glanced up and saw the bridge ahead. "Only a couple of blocks now," he thought, "and I'll be back again."

For six months they had trained in the heat and sand of Fort Bliss, Texas. This whole outfit of men from the streams, mountains and cool evenings of the Northwest had grown to hate the sweltering heat and burning sand of Texas, in the way that only homesick, independent men can grow to hate the Army and the stinking holes where the Army trains its men. But always there had been Juarez, just across the bridge from El Paso; there a different country, a far better life. In Juarez, the G.I. was king, at least while he had money. There his hard earned dollars could buy him forgetfulness in an air-conditioned bar where he could listen to fine entertainment. More likely, he would wander into gay and carefree cabarets, far from the tourist's well-beaten path, where pretty Mexican girls were his to dance with, to drink with, and to love.

He was at the bridge now. A glistening M.P. stood resolutely there, to check soldier's passes. The M.P. couldn't cross that bridge no matter what happened in Juarez. He could only check them going over and again coming back and you had better look good, soldier. He grinned as he walked past the M.P., purposely ignoring that staunch character. It felt good because he had never done it before. Of course the M.P. ignored him, too. It wasn't his job to watch out for stray civilians.

He walked up to the toll window. "Still 2 cents a trip?" he asked. "No sir, it's been three cents for a long time," the lady answered. He grinned, "More inflation."

He paid his money and kept the two cents change in his hand. Sure enough, there were the same dirty kids down below the bridge hollering, "Pennies, Senor?" He leaned over the railing.

"Here, catch, muchachos," he cried. From below he heard the pennies strike the baskets they carried for just that purpose. A sudden thought made him look around sheepishly. "Is muchachos the word for kids?" he asked himself. No one was staring at him so he felt reassured. He never did know any Spanish but then, who needed to in Juarez? He turned again to watch the kids. The mighty Rio Grande was still the same shallow and narrow mud hole. Back home it would have been a mighty poor creek but here it separated two countries.

He turned leisurely and walked across the bridge. On the other side, he stopped. There before his eyes was Juarez avenue, the main street. It looked just the same, the cheap

neon signs, the sidewalks crowded with servicemen and tourists. His heart beat faster as he heard from here, there and everywhere the gay laughter and loud music of people having a wild time. He felt the way he used to feel, an excited feeling, a good feeling.

From the sidewalk a grubby little hand shoved a poster at him. Printed in English, it said, "Come and see them. Twenty beautiful and exciting girls. 20. See the greatest floor show this side of Paris. No cover charge, inexpensive drinks. Come and see it all at the New Waikiki." In small print, "turn right and walk one block," and in big letters, "see the Mombo dance." A picture of a beautiful and scantily clad Mexican girl stared up at him.

"That's the lousiest gyp joint in Juarez," he said. After a few trips, they had learned to steer clear of the Waikiki. It was strictly for tourists. There were better girls, better entertainment and cheaper drinks lots of places.

He wandered on down Juarez Ave. slowly being pushed along with the crowd. A storekeeper grabbed his sleeve. "Very fine things inside," he shouted as he pulled him, "very cheap too."

He shook the man's hand loose good naturedly. "No thanks, buddy." Before he went back he would have to go in one of those numerous little shops for tourists. "I know I can get something for one-third the price they ask at first." The shop owner would soon see that he knew his way around. Besides, it was fun to haggle prices.

He felt a tug at his pants and looked down. A dirty-faced, shoeless boy of five or so was tugging at his leg. "Shine, senor, shine? Ten centavos." He always felt sorry for the kids and so he had a shine, a good one too. He tossed the little boy a quarter. "If he ever bought a pair of shoes he wouldn't make a nickel," he thought cynically to himself. Still, it was a good shine.

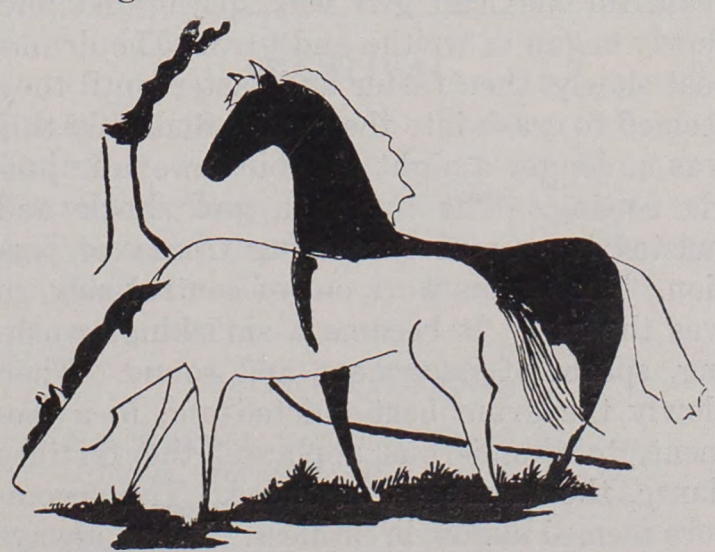
He continued walking farther into the city. It was the same crowd that jostled him along; the fat and short Mexican women with their once gayly colored but now faded and dirty shawls; the well dressed tourists; the soldiers and "fly boys," enjoying their new found freedom with caps in their pockets, neckties off and sleeves turned up; the shabbily dressed policeman with the sleeves of his dirty shirt rolled all the way up. He came to the corner and stopped for a moment. Immediately, one of the cab drivers was at his elbow.

"Wanna see girls, mister," he slyly asked. "I take you to best girls you ever see. Cheap too."

"I know where they are, pal," he replied and walked on. "I know where they are." The cab drivers were so bad before that the military authorities had forbidden soldiers to ride with them. It didn't make any difference, he thought. The places the cab drivers were soliciting for were within walking distance.

Across the street and he was in front of The Lobby. He walked in. Still the same. This was probably the best place in Juarez. The drinks and prices were American, the music was strictly Hit Parade, the floor show was in English and the place was shiny clean and had wonderful air-conditioning. Tourists would come here, be waited on by a Mexican waiter, see a Mombo dance and think they had seen a bit of Old Mexico. Still he liked it. The drinks were good, the floor show better and the atmosphere was OK too, people out to have a good time and succeeding pretty well.

"Table for one, senor?" the waiter asked. He squeezed him into a table back in a far corner. They were really busy tonight. The waiter got him situated and asked for his



order. "Whiskey and soda, please," he said, "and not too much soda."

Pat had been a good sport about the trip. They had been married five years now and never had gone very far on a vacation. But he could never forget that last night in Juarez or the many other nights. He knew he would return some day and Pat had sensed it. He had told her a lot about those experiences. He realized that there were a lot of places she would rather go. But that restless feeling inside him had been growing and growing until he just had to return. Once it was settled, she had seemed happy enough. After all, there were a lot of nice places and sights to see in Juarez. They had arrived after a gruelling three days of burning highways and stagnant air. Pat had gone to the hotel room after dinner, said she had a slight headache and was awfully tired. She didn't fool him. He knew she wanted to let him have a free hand in revisiting places where a good looking American woman would never go. Yes, she had been a good sport the whole way.

The floor show was well under way now. The M.C. was an American, naturally. He ordered another drink and the show went smoothly along. Very fine entertainment. Finally they came to the finale, still the same after eight years, the Mombo dance. The beautiful Mexican girl was spotlighted and slowly began to writhe and turn. The drums beat slowly, then faster and faster until they seemed to crash into the brain. Suddenly this was no longer a night club but an exotic jungle setting. The barefoot girl shook and twisted in an ever increasing frenzy of passion. The drums were out of control now, so was the girl. It became a shrieking, crashing, spasm of movement and sound. Then slowly the drum beat quieted and in a moment, to thunderous applause, the fertility dance, the Mombo, was ended. The spectators seemed almost breathless. It had always had that effect on him. The floor show was over.

"About time to see how the other half of Juarez has been faring," he thought to himself. He rose and walked out of the club. "I'm sure having a good time. Just like I remember it all. Hasn't changed a bit."

He turned right at the next corner and made his way down dark and narrow side streets and alleys. It had been a long time, but he made his way unerringly to "soldier's alley." That's what they had called the place. Sure enough, across a foot bridge, another block to the right and he was there. "Soldier's alley." It was only a couple of blocks long and it was still booming. Here there was no pretence of respectability or cleanliness. They were disreputable looking places, wooden signs hanging crookedly, badly in need of paint. There were plenty of other, nicer places in Juarez devoted to the same thing but he and his buddies had liked it here.

"On that last night before we shipped," he mused to himself, "there must have been a hundred of us here. We really turned the place upside down. I can remember coming outside for air that night and hearing the Whiffenpoof song drifting from one place, loud laughter from another, loud jazz from the jukebox of a third. We laughed and sang and spent our money like water. All of us left just in time to make the curfew. And as we gathered in a mob to take off, the girls came out from every doorway and waved goodbye, genuine friendship in their cynical and too old eyes."

"Goodbye, G.I.'s"—"Goodbye, Joe"—"Bill"—"Tom," etc. "Come back to see us." It had been eight years but he was there.

As he walked along, he sensed that he was a little out of place. Soldier's alley was still just that, lots of servicemen. They wouldn't notice one slightly older civilian, he hoped. The atmosphere didn't seem quite as lively as he slowly ambled between the dives. The

gaiety seemed more forced, somehow, than the way it was pictured in his mind. He grew tired of aimless wandering and decided to enter the "Half Moon," the very place he and some of his buddies had spent that last night. It looked the same, still crowded, still lots of girls, still the same good looking bartender, a Mexican with a college degree. They had asked him about this and he had replied simply, "I own this place. I make lots of money."

He took a stool up at the bar. "You buy me drink, huh?" He glanced around and saw one of the frowsy, unkept but not bad looking girls at his elbow. "Sure thing. Grab a stool," he replied and ordered a round.

Just then a chair crashed to the floor and he spun around to see a drunken soldier jump up from a table with another girl. "What the hell am I doin' in this crumby joint," the soldier almost sobbed. "I got a wife back in St. Paul. I'm getting the hell out of here." And with that he lurched towards the door and staggered out.

He turned back to the girl sitting by him. She put her hand on his knee "You like to dance with me?" she asked.

"What's your name?" he asked.

"Marie," she said.

"Sure, Marie, let's dance."

When he got out on the floor he noticed her hands weren't very clean. Her breath had the faint odor of stale garlic. They shuffled around for two or three dances but she wasn't very good and he wasn't enjoying himself.

"Let's have another drink," he suggested. They went over to a table and she climbed on his lap and snuggled up to him. He noticed the flies buzzing around. "Another drink," he told the bartender.

He began to feel the stifling effects of the heat and loosened his collar. "You like to go to room with me," the girl said. "Only three dollars and very clean." He saw a cockroach crawling across the floor. The girl smelled of old dried perspiration.

"No!!—No, not right now," he answered more mildly. "Here, drink your drink." She started to rub his back.

"Here, here's a dollar. Take it and leave me alone, will you?" he said. She looked offended but quickly picked up the dollar.

He got up and walked to the door. A blast of hot air almost drove him back in. He became conscious of just how filthy the streets and sidewalks really were. He began to walk faster. Garbage was thrown everywhere and there was the steady drone of thousands of flies. He appreciated the dark streets and alleys on the way back. It was too dark to see just how dirty they were.

His purposeful stride made the blocks fairly fly behind him. In no time, it seemed, he was back to Juarez avenue and all the bright lights.

They didn't seem the same, somehow, and he noticed something he had never bothered to watch for before. With all the music and gay atmosphere he didn't see a single person smiling among all those he passed on the way to the bridge. Another three cents and he was back in El Paso. A short and quick cab ride and he was in front of their hotel. He felt sticky and in need of a shower, a long, cold shower.

The cool air of the hotel seemed to revive his sagging spirits. A short elevator ride brought him to the floor where their room was located. He began to feel more relaxed and almost refreshed as he hurried down the hotel corridor, anxious to see Pat and talk to her.

"Tomorrow," he thought as he opened the door, "tomorrow, I'll take Pat over to see the sights."

FESTIVAL

I was wearing boots
Your feet were nude
We moved through the trembling wood
And crushed dandelion yellowgreenness underfoot.

by **Jack P. Shapira**

Mr. Shapira who has previously contributed stories to Venture is a senior majoring in English. He is from New York City.

Are We Stuck With the Status Quo?

by **WILLIAM EVAN JONES**

EVERY generation, some self-appointed spokesman decides to label the generation that follows. This practice is likely to continue until the spokesmen run out of names. In the recent past there have been "younger," "lost," and "jazz" generations. During post-war years we were informed that we are the "silent" generation. One of the reasons for us being so labeled is, no doubt, because of our silent reluctance to honor the tradition of naming our subsequent generation.

Be that as it may, we're the "silent" generation, so let's see why we are so labeled. Time magazine, Nov. 5, 1951 said, "young people do not issue manifestoes, make speeches, or carry posters . . . do not want to go into the Army. . . . Their ambitions have shrunk. . . . They want a good secure job . . . either through fear, passivity, or conviction, they are ready to conform. . . . They are looking for a faith."

Thornton Wilder, in Harper's magazine, April 1953 said, "The younger generation of today is facing the too-long delayed task of consolidating its liberty and impressing upon it a design, a meaning, a focus. No wonder they strike us as silent."

WILDER climaxed his article with, "Their parents wring their hands over them; their professors find them lukewarm or cool; the Army grows anxious; we older friends are often exasperated. These impatiences are provoked by the fact that they wish to live correctly by their lights and not by ours. In proportion as we are free we must accord them that."

Although both magazines pointed out reasons for the current situation they nevertheless insisted that we are "silent." Let's pull up a life size mirror and see just how "silent" we are.

The Montana State University campus can not be called the perfect cross-section of American life. Nevertheless, in many respects this campus epitomizes the very features upon which national writers excel in levying attacks.

A college community lends itself to analyzation most advantageously when divided into academic and extra-curricular sections. A non-college community lends itself to analyzation best when evaluated from a "working hours" and "free-time" viewpoint. Thus a college is not as separated from "real life" as some would imagine.

ACADEMICALLY speaking, MSU is in a rut. We've been labeled the "Intellectual Airpocket of the Bitterroots," and sundry other titles denoting an intellectual void. These collective condemnations are, of course, fallacious. Yet where there is a tendency toward accusation, there is oft times reasonable justification for such a tendency.

One reason for such a tendency is the reluctance on the part of men with power to raise academic requirements. The inevitable, practical point of contention is that it takes a huge enrollment to run a state university and make it worthwhile in the taxpayer's eyes. Yet if the student body was forceful in a demand for higher academic standards, the men with power might listen. But because students prefer to revere the grade re-

Mr. Jones wrote this article at the request of Venture editors. He is a junior in journalism from Miles City where he has reported for the Miles City Star. At the University he has been active in many extra-curricular activities notably by serving on Central Board and as editor of the Kaimin.

port rather than the education itself, the trend toward "more numbers" rather than "higher standards" will no doubt continue.

Today's collegians have been reared under the war-time slogan, "The end result is what counts." They have simply shifted that slogan from war-time "victory" to the University "diploma." The diploma represents social prestige, a key to the first job, and a symbol of accumulated grade points.

UNTIL collegians realize that the only true academic education comes from a self-generated interest in learning, they will continue to silently trudge to eight o'clocks interested first in being marked present, and secondly if at all in the education supposedly available.

In evaluating Montana State University from the extra-curricular viewpoint we find diversification unusually rampant. These diversified interests are determined by home environments. These home environments are scattered from New York to Washington, thus substantiating the claim that MSU is, in some respects, a legitimate cross section of the country.

Perhaps it is in the extra-curricular respect of college life that one of Wilder's assertions is correct. He said, "The silent generation is fashioning the twentieth century man . . . it is not only suffering and bearing forward a time of transition, it is figuring forth a new mentality."

This "new mentality" to which Wilder refers is, no doubt, an outgrowth of our generation's belief that we're the best generation ever to hit this earth. We've got more, traveled more, seen more, done more and will live more than any other group of people to date.

THE INEVITABLE by-product of this belief of superiority is simply an attitude of complacency. We've got everything—and whose gonna take it away? We don't think any one can upset our apple cart. Therefore, we'll be satisfied with the status quo until it isn't to our advantage to keep still.

It's in the various methods we employ to keep still that the diversification of Montana State University is exemplified. Montana Forum, a group geared to appeal to those students who wish to listen to supposedly controversial issues, then comment upon them, has nearly faded out of the picture this spring. The past two Forums, one involving Aber day, the other athletics, were attended by a combined total of thirty people. That includes the lecturers. This indicates an emphatic vote of confidence in the status quo.

Yet today's collegian, not to be overshadowed by a forebearer's prowess, is willing to dedicate several evenings a week to the subsidization of Montana's alcholic industry. When conventional reasons for mass migrations to a tavern are not numerous enough, today's collegian can rationalize that anything from a sorority serenade to a intramural championship is sufficient reason for such a migration.

THE MANY organizations, committees, and individuals that comprise the ASMSU extra-curricular set-up are not known for their continual state of flux. In many cases the only major changes from year to year are the names of the officers. Not since Bill Smurr's celebrated resignation as Kaimin editor in 1949 has there been an upheaval conducive to unrestrained comment. Since that time, the status quo has been punctured only sporadically by such unconventional occurences as stolen Sigma Chi sweethearts, editorial campaigns on Hell weeks, and proposed Field house-Student Union mergers.

As exemplified by MSU's collective attitude toward the contemporary "state" of affairs, it seems rather obvious that we are a "silent" generation. Collectively speaking, we're passively interested in some phases of collegiate life that directly affect us, but overall we're content to be complacently satisfied with the status quo.

No society can harbor stereotyped personalities; therefore, there are always nonconformists present who ask, "Are we stuck with the status quo?" Here again Wilder is right. He maintains ". . . young people are un-

impressed by time-honored conventions." We adhere to conventional beliefs as long as they are advantageous to us, then we know no restrictions when it comes to forsaking those conventions.

THERE have been definite indications during the past year that some collegians are not satisfied with the status quo. The winning speech in the Montana oratorical contest was, "Are We Losing Our Convictions?" The fact that the student judges thought a speech of this nature was important enough to win first prize is indicative of a possible state of flux.

But perhaps the greatest field in which students have broken their silence has been regarding collegiate athletics. Never before has this sacred pastime come under such heavy fire as it has recevied during the past year. Where our father's feared to challenge the omnipotence of the gridiron, today's collegiate leaders brazenly talk of cutting football from the student budget.

On other campuses leaders have displayed their mettle in denouncing athletic emphasis. Even the University of Iceland voted against making sports compulsory and said, "The University should be the mainstay of Iceland's intellectual life, not a circus for sprawling and grimacing."

THIS student clamor in regard to athletics is but one instance of a possible trend to discredit the "silent" generation label. The hue and cry raised during recent legislation concerning the investigation of schools and the mockery of academic freedom is another example of how students will respond if the issue is important enough to warrant their attention.

"Are We Stuck With the Status Quo?" is a question that knows no definite answer. Rather, our generation will magnanimously accept any flimsy title the nation's self-appointed labelers intend to tack on us. But we will steadfastly remember that ours is the independent generation in that we know no equal, bow to no conventions, and respect and select only those changes which stand to benefit ours and subsequent generations.

Fog

by **DOREEN MAGAZIAN**

KNEW it was morning because the alarm clock had gone off at the appointed time, and a little later I had had breakfast.

I walked. Yesterday and the days before dogs had barked at my approach, had followed me for a short distance, then losing interest in my shoes, had left me. Today there were no dogs about. Today, the street lamps were on; they were lit but diffused no radiance. They stood in space, unsupported and derelict. Yesterday and the days before they had stood firmly perched on their poles and it had not been necessary to light them; also, spaced as they were at regular intervals—the lamp-posts—they had offered a definite perspective.

There were other things too that claimed existence. Triangles, circles, semi-circles, chopped off tangents and unbranched twigs. How absurdly proud these things had been yesterday, bearing the names people had given them; houses, spikes, turrets, balconies, wheelbarrows and trees. Now they were there, unconditionally, and with no functions to fulfill.

There was no sound either. Nature had seen to it too. She had paved the gravel and the side-walk with a white substance, smooth and even. There might have been a wind, but I wouldn't have known; for the wind to assert itself needs obstacles. And the sky was neither blue nor lowered, neither cloudy nor partly cloudy. It too had lost its identity and had receded into a private sphere. I thought there was a roof above my head, and it seemed as though if I lifted my arm high enough I would be able to touch it. The idea and then the action, if performed, presented itself in all its absurdity. But there being nobody to witness my action, I lifted my arm to its full height. There was no thump and the thing yielded softly and with no resist-

ance. It was not a roof after all and, somehow, I was relieved.

I walked. Ah, but how inaccurate words could sometimes be! Walking meant motion and progress; but what if the motion were merely mechanical and the progress accidental?

There was anxiety. In my hurry I had left behind so many important things; bits of paper mostly, and some tokens. One, of course, did not go around carrying those papers on oneself. But what if the house caught fire and the papers were lost. Documents were so useful and re-assuring. Somebody who had no doubts had filled in the blanks in clear and elaborate handwriting recording my name and surname, the year, the day even, of my birth, the color of my hair and eyes, my occupation, the purpose of my being here, and the reason of my being here and not there, and my destination. There was no mention of what would follow after. There were three signatures, a stamp, a seal and another stamp. How I envied the person who had done this deed for me. I felt sorry for him too, for he had believed in what I, myself, was not convinced of.

Had he been here, at this white moment, would he have recognized me? Certainly he would have confused me with the rest—the triangles, the circles and the tangents. Had he seen me lifting my arm, he would have accused my action of irrelevancy. And what if he asked questions, trying to find out who I was? There was fear in the speculation. Would he believe me now that my words would be unprotected by the efficiency and importance of his office-room, the records and the well-kept files? They would be un-

Miss Magazian who has previously written for Venture is from Athens, Greece. She is attending MSU on a Fulbright scholarship.

substantiated answers told in a space turned unperspective. I would argue persistently and desperately insist on my identity. But in the whiteness there would be no piece of evidence.

The fear of being ignored
Of being unrecognized
And the imagery of fear!
Knocking upon doors remaining eternally unbolted
Friendship offered and being asked for credentials
Distrustful eyes encountered endlessly.
Stranded and detached

Then came forgetfulness—of name, birth certificates and of prescribed destination. There was pleasure in the momentary absence of compulsion and in the temporary non-existence of an arbitrary goal. And all questions ceased—those one asks oneself—the whys, the wherefores and especially the whatfores. Not being asked they required no deceitful answers, and the absence of half-truths necessitated no gratuitous acceptance of the unacceptable.

Silence within silence
Inseparably white
Distortions partly-living and sublime
Words—common, colloquial and uncommon—reduced to impotent circumlocutions.
The turning back and the going forward having lost all meaning
The being here and the lifting of the arm having usurped all meaning and intention
The coexistence of vibrant fibres and flat variantes
The weariness, the undecision, etc.

I walked and the walking assumed both volition and intention. For I had heard the chimes of a clock—it wasn't so late after all—and the building came to view. At the turning of the road there was the butting

point of its out-moded turret fighting its way through the lifting mists; then patch after patch revealed itself unaltered after the unveiling. Electric lights gleamed through the windless windows, at first dismally, then, as I neared, with assurance.

I met people on my way, hurrying. Here, in the immediate vicinity of the fulgid building, the snow had been shoveled off the pavements, and people's steps thumped on the even ground. My steps too, I noticed, had ceased to be soundless but they were still muffled.

—Hi, said somebody
—Hi, I said
—Hi, said somebody in surprise
—Hi, I said in astonishment
—Hi, called somebody
—Hi, I shouted.
The terror of being discovered
Of being found out
And the imagery of fear
Doors opening willingly offering work, duty and learning and frustration
Friendship, sometimes accepted, always expectant
Eyes, neither distrustful nor distrusting but demanding
Rescued and relayed
The waste of undisciplined energy, etc.

SUMMER BOY

by **Bernard Heringman**

Sprawled in sinuous majesty on the earth
He worries a green blade with eager teeth,
Searches the mystery of chlorophyll
And sunlight. Now his eyes are deep with summer,
His blood thick with it, when locust wings shimmer
In the sun. Green grass makes a delicate meal
For young lips, for his teeth a curious fuel.

When the wind turns smoky with singing green,
Crafty gazelle boy transplanted will learn
How the pod of silence bursts as drifting air
Drops sudden hunger among his nightingales
. . . Learn what succulent explosion appeals
Most tenderly taking his disarmed ear:

. . . Shrapnel song . . . or jug-jug lore.
A difference in the color of the grass
Is the only difference. No doubt a blast
Disturbs the chlorophyll. The blades turn brown;
The green, untasted mystery dribbles out,
Acrid and unrewarding. It will clot
In the dust; germinate slowly in the sun;
And grow softly for another generation.

The Play of Eyes

Miss Sheffels, who is from Great Falls, Montana, is a sophomore majoring in journalism. Formerly she attended Montana State College at Bozeman. She is a reporter for the Kaimin.

by **BARBARA SHEFFELS**

A pair of eyes of deepest blue met mine the other day. For an instant a flicker of acknowledgment escaped us both, then human dignity quickly took over, averting both glances—mine to an interesting crack in the cement sidewalk, hers to a window display perhaps, or to the lights flashing at the intersection.

How many times a day do strange eyes meet yours? A million times, perhaps, in a big city, or maybe only once or twice on the quiet streets of your own hometown. Whatever kind of glance it may be—flirtatious, calculating, frankly friendly, or preoccupied, however long it may last, a fleeting second or a hypnotic eternity, that glance fills its niche in a game the whole world plays—the play of eyes.

There are no rules to this game and the only equipment consists of a pair of eyes, blue, gray, or amber, wide, popped, or slanted, it matters not, complete with lids attached to relieve a judgment too penetrating or a stare too cold.

The play of eyes begins as two people come within sight of each other. Their first thoughts are—"Is it anyone I know? If so, who? And if not, what shall I do with my eyes? Shall I stare straight ahead and risk falling on my nose? Shall I drop my eyes to the ground (figuratively speaking, that is) and appear meek and bashful? Shall I look the other person straight in the eyes to show that I have nothing to hide, nothing to be ashamed of? —That I am a fine, upstanding citizen who pays his taxes and contributes to charity?"

As the two people come nearer each other and each ascertains to himself the fact that the other is a stranger, the real play begins. Whatever was decided in the few safe minutes before the real test is usually forgotten. If they had decided to stare straight ahead, curiosity often overtakes them and they end up staring at each other. If they had chosen the braver course and planned a penetrating stare, courage often fails and both end up staring at some distant object pretending to see something unusual in the other direction.

By far the most interesting play of eyes occurs among youth. "Will she look or won't she?" a young boy thinks. Too often he is so preoccupied with his calculations he fails to notice buck teeth or an engagement ring. Their eyes meet and presto love has blossomed if only for a moment.

The play of eyes is perhaps the most superficial of all the games the world plays. In stories it is a prelude to romance, intrigue, adventure. In life it becomes very daily, almost humdrum. It presents problems and delights but seldom food for thought. In contrast to all the other games of the world, the play of eyes goes on unnoticed and overlooked by players and spectators alike.

Afternoon

The following story and poems, "Student Union Lounge," and "What Do I Spell," were written by Miss Chesmore who is a junior in English from Florence, Montana.

by **EMILY CHESMORE**

She played before the window, soaking up what watery sunlight the bleak, half-spring day had to offer. Outside, the dry wind mouthed at her through the window pane and petulantly rattled the glass, but she heard none of it. In fact, she heard nothing but her own tuneless humming and the rhythmic swish and scrape of her father's razor as he shaved in the kitchen downstairs. No one else was home and the house was still. Now and then she glanced out, but there was nothing in the flying dust and empty gray fields for her child eyes. Her own thoughts were too warm and busy and comfortable to tolerate competition.

A deep irrigation ditch ran through the field which lay before the window where she played, and as she sat a doll in the window sill and tucked a doll-blanket around it, she glanced bleakly at the sluggish water. It looked thick and gray. It didn't in the least resemble the water she tossed stones into in the summertime. She sat trying to invent some new circumstance to amuse her, for the afternoon was becoming long and tiresome. Though at first she failed to notice, the weak April sun had filmed over with clouds and the wind nagged more insistently at the house-corners. Swish . . . scrape . . . swish . . . scrape. . . . Her father was still shaving. She could picture the dirty suds in the basin, topped by tiny, black hairs rinsed off the razor. She turned listlessly back to the window and yawned. The sullen water still swirled desolately in the big ditch. She started to look away, then waited. Minutes passed. Swish . . . scrape. . . . She sat perfectly still. Her eyes never wavered from their object. Something was happening down there.

Along the high, naked weeds that lined the ditch-bank, thrusting up thick and stubborn despite a winter of wind and pelting snow, moved a man, bending over the water, —walking slowly and leaning over the water. Once or twice he squatted suddenly and reached out with wild jerking motions, but each time he rose and after a few hasty, stumbling steps, would resume his peculiar posture, watching the water with a terrible patience. She regarded all this without stirring. It seemed like hours. But he was close enough now so that she could tell who it was. It was Mr. Evans—and he was trying to get Georgie out of the water! One instant longer she stared. Yes, she was sure of it. Then she shoved the assortment of blankets and doll dresses from her lap, jumped from the stool and clattered down the bare wooden

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WHAT DO I SPELL

by **Emily Chesmore**

My glance the sidewalk marchers foil,
As I, in orbic cage retreat
With half-drawn lashes, strain to seek
The answer in its optic coil.

What do I spell in measured toil
To those evasive eyes I meet—
A moment victimized, replete,
Before they leap to clement soil?

But puzzled stares no concord bid,
No sparks play there in kindled zone
But dart and clash as stone to stone,
Till what was hid again is hid.

Thus I alone in shadowed cell
Am left to wonder what I spell.

stairs. "Poppa!" Scrape . . . scrape. . . . The big man who was her father slopped the razor around in the basin for an extra long time, as though a little annoyed at the interruption, then he screwed up his face in a beautiful contortion and the razor scratched at the stiff, black whiskers. For a moment she forgot her errand and gazed in happy fascination at the process. Then as he reached down to rinse the blade in the bowl, his face unscrewed and she remembered.

As she started to speak she almost heard her mother's sharp voice saying, "You'll have to talk loud. You know your father can't hear." She sidled a few steps closer. "Poppa."

"Unh." He kept shaving.

"Mr. Evans is out at the ditch. He's trying to get Georgie out of the water." Her heart was pounding now, but her father just stared a little closer into the mirror. Desperation made her brave.

"You'd better go help."

"Aw, don't think it's anything. Prob'ly lost sump'm." But curiosity pricked at him. He flicked one glance from the mirror and the gleaming blade out the window toward the ditch. Then he stopped. He stood spraddle-legged, arms hanging out from his sides, razor dangling from one hand. A slow trickle of blood ran down his thrust-out face. Then he tossed the razor on the wash stand and ran.

Mr. Evans was kneeling on a broad plank that lay across the ditch for a walking bridge. He tugged at the heavy sodden body of the little boy. From the window she watched her father run across the yard, the wind ballooning his thin shirt. Then she turned away as the two men dragged the small body from the jealous current and carried it toward the house. She slipped to another window where she could see and hear them out on the porch. "Too late, too late," Mr. Evans wailed, wringing his hands and wiping at his twisting face as her father worked over the boy.

"Sometimes they save drowned lambs this way," her father muttered as he picked up the baby by his heels, swung him head downward and slapped steadily at his back. Finally he laid him carefully down and looked up at the other man. "Gone too long. No use." They shook their heads slowly. Neither moved; they only looked at the limp, wet body. Then Mr. Evans bent and tenderly raised the boy in his arms. She watched as her father followed Mr. Evans to the corner of the house, then she hurried again to the window by the wash stand. The two figures grew smaller and smaller as they trudged across the long, windy field to Mr. Evan's place. The house was very still. The suds had disappeared in the basin and the short black hairs floated on top of the dirty water.

She crept back upstairs. The doll was still propped on the sill in her blanket. She picked up the bundle and began to croon tunelessly, rocking slightly, as she turned and stared a long time at the thick, grey water swirling coldly in the ditch. The wind whipped and snapped at the tall skinny weeds along the bank. She clutched at the doll looking down at it—but it was limp and soft and it only stared up at her with a painted, wooden smile.

STUDENT UNION LOUNGE

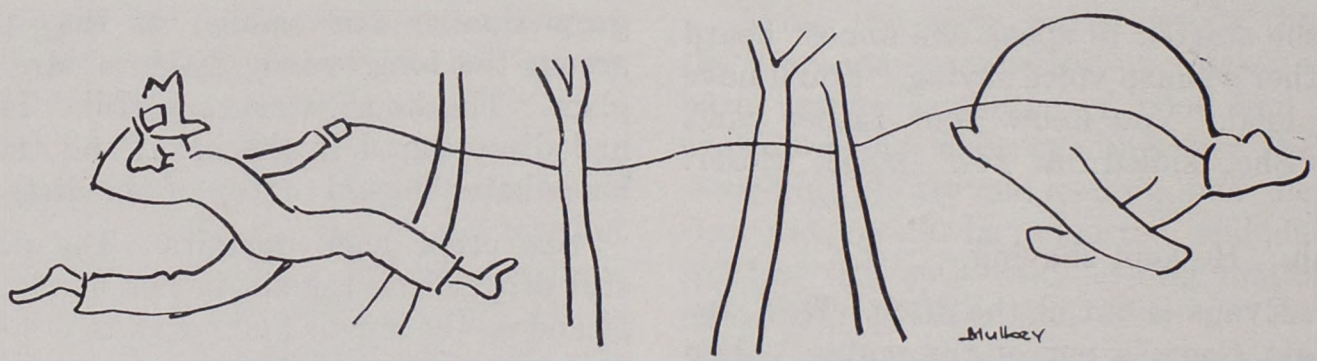
by **Emily Chesmore**

The modern savage boldly here invades
In corduroy breeches masquerades.
No fauna now nor flora compensate,
He flicks a switch his world to correlate,
And hidden in a padded chair succumbs;
The weather report, the market report, the
"luncheon airs,"
The calculated laughter on the stairs
Replace the fading thunder of old drums.
We now in newer ways communicate.
But some old laws of jungle still remain,
The swaying hips an impetus retain;—
A cushioned jungle where new lovers meet
With one crouched stare into embrace retreat,
And stamp the new biology of fate.

Luke and the Runaway Bear

Mr. Coston who is a junior majoring in forestry is from Oakridge, Tennessee. Before coming to Montana State University, he attended the University of Tennessee for two years.

by **THOMAS COSTON**



Luke is a typical mountaineer. Tall, raw-boned, and with the innocent temperament of Job or somebody, he runs Fruitland's only business establishment. His general store is the lodge hall for any hunter that happens to drift in to sit by the little pot-bellied stove and swap yarns. There the men of Clear Creek Township gather to tree coons, chase foxes, and catch twenty-five pound catfish.

I made a grand entrance there one blustery December afternoon over a year ago, and immediately became the hero of the day. To the citizens of Fruitland, Montana is as remote and far off as Shangri-La. It was good to be back home again, and to hear Jess Townsend kill a twelve point buck for the thirteenth time.

After the third round of old Dave Lyda's moonshine, that cow elk I had bushwhacked at fifty feet had become a seven point bull four hundred yards off and running like a scared antelope. For three hours I reeled off rather lengthy tales of the Montana wilderness, and the boys were all ears until Luke's wife came in and suggested that maybe their cows were in pain. So the boys all took off home to milk the cows and sample the mash, leaving only Luke and me to hold the fort, and Luke to tell me his troubles.

It seemed that a certain bear was raising particular hell with Luke's apple orchard.

"If'n I have two dang apples left outa th' whole dang crop, hit'l shore s'prise me," he said.

"Why don't you shoot 'im," I said.

"Lad, let me tell you," he began, sounding like a country preacher, "hit takes a **gun** to kill a bear. Why, I don't reckon a charge o' buckshot smack in th' face would faze a bear. Nope, if'n I had me a powerful rifle, why I'd show thet bear. But the shape I'm in now fer guns, thet ol' bear can have ever damn apple I got before I'd muss with 'im, yes sir!"

"I got a gun," I said, remembering the Mauser buried under the other duffel in my car. Luke and I decided then and there to put an end to the bear's depredations.

That night I met Luke beside the trail up Green Mountain, at the very top of which sits Luke's apple orchard. (No one in that part of North Carolina ever hunts except at night.) I had the rifle and ten cartridges, and Luke had an axe, two butcher knives, a length of rope, and a long pole, carefully sharpened at one end.

"What's the rope for, Luke," I asked. "You gonna hang 'im?"

Luke looked at me disdainfully. "How

else'd we skid 'im home?" There's nothing like having confidence.

We climbed Green Mountain and sat down downwind of the orchard to await developments. Luke carefully planned the battle despite my objections to his methods.

"Lad, I was a' huntin' bears while you was still in th' plannin' stage."

I'd be willing to bet my eye teeth that he had never been within a mile of a bear unless he was unaware of the bear's presence. But further argument was useless, so Luke's strategy was put into effect.

He put his back to a big hickory tree, stuck the two knives in a rotten log which was to serve as breastworks, propped his spear against the same log and sat down with the axe across his lap. Last of all he took off his shoes and placed them carefully to one side, out of the way.

"Allus could run better 'thout m' shoes on," he whispered.

So we waited for the bear. I suppose luck was pretty much on our side, or else we were up against a pretty stupid bear. We whispered endlessly and Luke kept getting up to get an apple to eat or to move his shoes. He always carried the axe and the spear on these little expeditions, and he crept along the ground like a six-foot-six cougar.

Luke was just starting to move his shoes over to the other side of the breastworks when a sudden shower of apples pelted the ground from a tree not twenty-five yards from us. There was a moment of utter silence.

"D' bears shake apples outa trees?" asked Luke with a quaver in his voice.

"I know one that does," I said. This sentence was punctuated by the "kerplunk" of the bear dropping to the ground, where he immediately dove into the apples with a zest that made Luke wince. I stood up to shoot, but hesitated for a moment, waiting for a clear shot in the bright moonlight. The bear suddenly took about four quick strides in our direction just to get at a choice apple lying to one side. But it looked like a charge to Luke.

"Oh Lordy, hyar he comes!" Luke grabbed the rifle out of my hands and started shooting and praying at the same time. I don't remember the exact words of his prayer, but its overall meaning was to the effect that if God found it impossible to help Luke and me, then at least he should not help that bear!

Meantime, he ran that rifle dry so fast it sounded like a machine gun. And when the smoke cleared a dark form lay beneath the apple tree.

Luke yelled like a Cherokee and sailed across the breastworks with a mighty leap, plucking out one of the knives en route. He had the rope out and a noose made before he reached the bear, around whose neck he immediately placed the noose, pulling it tight. Luke backed off to the other end of the rope, twisted it around his hand several times for a better grip, and announced that he was taking his bear home.

"Don't forget your shoes," I said.

Evidently that bear didn't like the sound of my voice. At least he used it for a cue. He came around with a snort and didn't even bother to get up before he started running. I've never seen anything run so fast. He went through that orchard hitting every fourth tree and Luke, his hand wound tightly in the rope, went right along with him, hitting all the trees the bear missed.

(Continued on Page 27)

Strike Vote

Mr. Britton is a sophomore majoring in education. He is from Ronan, Montana.

by **JOHN BRITTON**

It has its beginning in the morning, a vague feeling of unrest, of wonder. And it grows. The routine chores are done automatically. No outward sign that this is anything but a normal rainy day, but breakfast has a soggy sawdust taste. The small talk at the table is the same as usual, no hint of worry is intruded. Absorbed in thought, you drive to work. The red light jars you back to consciousness, too late to stop, you go on —no man should have to work on Saturday. You punch in, and then the feeling begins to lose its vagueness; at times the feeling is absorbed in the progress of the work at hand, but yet it grows; grows from a vague feeling to a premonition, watered by a word, nurtured by a half-joking, half-meant phrase, then lost again in interests in the job. Work, work hard, then find yourself drawn relentlessly, unconsciously, into a little knot of conversation. The boss walks through, the premonition flashes back, grows larger, and cannot be lost in work.

Special union meeting at two! The time clock clangs, and little groups of men, serious men, straggle to their cars parked in the lot behind the shop. Some start at once for home; others dawdle, dreading to be alone. And then, inevitably, you are alone and driving home, you and your premonition. You eat, forcing the food past the lump that fills your throat, and feel a tautness in the muscles of your stomach. Another hour to kill, you try to read, and find yourself reading the same words over and over. You take the last cigarette out of the morning's fresh pack, it is harsh, yet flat and tasteless. You crush it out and move outdoors into the cold drizzling rain. The tautness turns into a knot as you start the car and head for the union hall.

Three men, standing silently at the foot of the stairs, mumble a word of greeting as you edge past them up the half-dark stairway.

The big room is beginning to fill; a line of men waiting to pay their dues is forming at one side. Your knot of tension relaxes, diffusing in a general, common tension that pervades the air, a disturbing calm like the muggy hour before a storm. The room fills faster now, and as it fills the tension mounts. The gavel drops and the rumble of voices fades and dies. Formalities of parliamentary procedure drag on interminably. Someone opens a window to let the accumulated tobacco smoke escape, and as it drifts slowly to the opening it forms patterns like cloud wisps on a summer afternoon. Minutes are read, committees report, and finally comes the report of the negotiating committee. A tall young man is recognized and he speaks hot angry words that burn their way into your mind, and then a quiet voice follows with words of caution, words of warning. Speaker follows speaker, and the swirling smoke is caught and twisted into strange erratic patterns. A man, more accustomed to doing than saying, stands, speaks slowly, hesitantly, words stumbling from his usually inarticulate lips. Cross currents of emotion, like the smoke, form patterns of their own. The tension flows into restless waves, advancing and retreating, gathering momentum. The arguments take on a passionate appeal—and the quiet voice of caution is lost. Strike! Strike! Strike!

Then suddenly you find yourself standing, words pouring out, violent words you hadn't meant to say, expressing thoughts you didn't know you had. The tension and emotion dance within your brain, anger and mistrust drive out your caution and your fears. Ex-

citement rises to a peak, and through it all the quiet voice of the chairman, as he recognizes first one and then another, allowing no hint of his opinion to show through. He leans back, eyes partly closed, as though in perfect peace, speaks, mentioning a name, and settles back—a sharp rap of the gavel, another name, another speaker. Louder, more insistant grows the throbbing, pulsing, quiet roar of "strike!"

Then the motion, the second, and the vote, a longer line of men form where the short line was. Each man signs the register, then marks his ballot and sits down. The line is long, the minutes hurry by with dragging feet. Conversation buzzes underneath the drifting smoke. The last man drops his ballot in the box; the box is opened, and the count begins. Intermittent silence falls over the room as the steady drone of the counting continues. The counting stops, the tabulation is checked, the results announced, and the meeting adjourns. Tension vanishes like a soap bubble, leaving only a damp stain of doubt as we stop for a beer before going home.

RUNAWAY BEAR

(Continued form Page 25)

I guess you could call that encounter a draw. The bear quit eating Luke's apples and Luke quit bear hunting—for good.

"Y' know," he told me the last time I saw him, "Thet dang bear got t' goin' so dang fast I jus' couldn' keep up a' him an' dodge them trees at th' same time, and I hit a big white oak head on. Well, Lad, thet knocked me flatter'n th' Widder Stevens chest, an' th' jar a' me fallin' scared th' bear and he let out a' 'boosh!'

"Well, I got up, spitted out a' few leaves an' sez, 'Bush, hell. Hit was a' damn tree!' "

The Moving Shadow

A story by Miss Buls who is a junior majoring in English from Missoula.

by **ALICE ANNE BULS**

THE SHADOWS of the boys moved squat and bent on the road, shortened almost to nothing by the noon sun.

"Hey Dell, did you ever find any money in that dump?"

Dell said, "Never looked for none," and watched his own long thin legs swing out, his feet striking the ground slowly, effortlessly. He saw how the short boy beside him ambled in a kind of crawl and stirred up dust, saw the top of his head, black and shiny, making a roof of hair over his face, followed his dull eyes which looked toward the glittering hills of trash. Dell could tell that his companion was going to say something, because the look in his eyes was always that way, like he was thinking real hard, and his mouth hung open and his lower lip moved a little. Finally the boy said, "Once ah-ah- I found four-bits down there." Dell waited out the pause which usually followed his friend's first sentence. "It was just layin' on the ground." The boy's shadow straightened to nothing as he stopped and stood with his hands on his hips, sweating. "Hey, let's us go down there now and look for some money."

"No, let's go swimming first."

"Hell, we can go swimmin' any time. Somebody else might come along and find it." Again Dell waited out the pause. "I'm goin'." The boy's shadow bent itself, moved off the road and over the top of the grass. Dell watched the blob of shadow drifting rhythmically, then followed it, saw the sparse brown grass and holes where gophers lived. He narrowed his eyes against the buzzing flight of grasshoppers, forcing himself not to flinch when one struck his arm or back.

AT THE edge of the dump, he came up behind his companion, who had stopped and peeled off his shirt, tying it by the sleeves around his waist. Dell stopped and stared in surprise: on the smaller boy's back there were heavy dark marks and lines raised on welts running from his shoulders to where his jeans cut another line straight across his back. Dell blurted, "What happened to your back? How did you—"

"My old man whipped me." The boy laughed ruefully and yet with contempt, bent over to stretch his back, winced, stretched his arms out and brought them in to his shoulders in a show of conscious power.

"Why did he whip you?"

"Ah, hell, he was drunk."

Dell laid a hand gingerly on his friend's shoulder. "Does it hurt?"

"Na-a-ah," proudly. But he shrugged Dell's hand off as if it lay heavy. "C'mon, let's go." He kicked aside a tin can and skirted the trash heaps, sometimes stooping and moving the trash with his foot. Suddenly he bent down and drew out from the rubbish a long piece of metal, which looked as if it had once been part of a bed-frame. He stood turning it about in his hands, then said, "Hey, we could sell this to the junk yard, y'know. Old Sam would give ya at least two-bits for it."

YAH," said Dell, hating the stench and the flies. He could see a curve of the yellow river and thought how good the water would feel in the hole a little way downstream under the big pine trees. He walked slowly towards the river, picking his way among the rubbish heaps and not looking back, hoping he would be followed without argument.

"Hey Dell, come here." Turning, Dell saw his friend tugging at a piece of pipe which lay under the trash, the boy's shadow moving in jerks back and forth over a junk heap, but he could not will himself to go and help. Then

he started walking toward the river again. "Dell, come here!" He kept walking stubbornly and slowly. Suddenly a bottle whizzed by his head and landed tinkling on the ground ahead of him and he heard the boy curse him shortly. Dell had reached the first of the pines and stood with his back against it, looking steadily at the other who glared back, cursed, dropped the pipe-end and stood up.

"All right, we'll go swimmin' now but after that you gotta help me. We'll take a lotta this stuff to town and sell it. Okay?"—he thrust his chin out—"Okay?"

"Okay." Dell stood lax against the tree, waiting as the bent shadow moved across the dump heaps and dissolved into the shadow of the tree.

AS THEY walked down through the big pines, Dell suddenly stopped short.

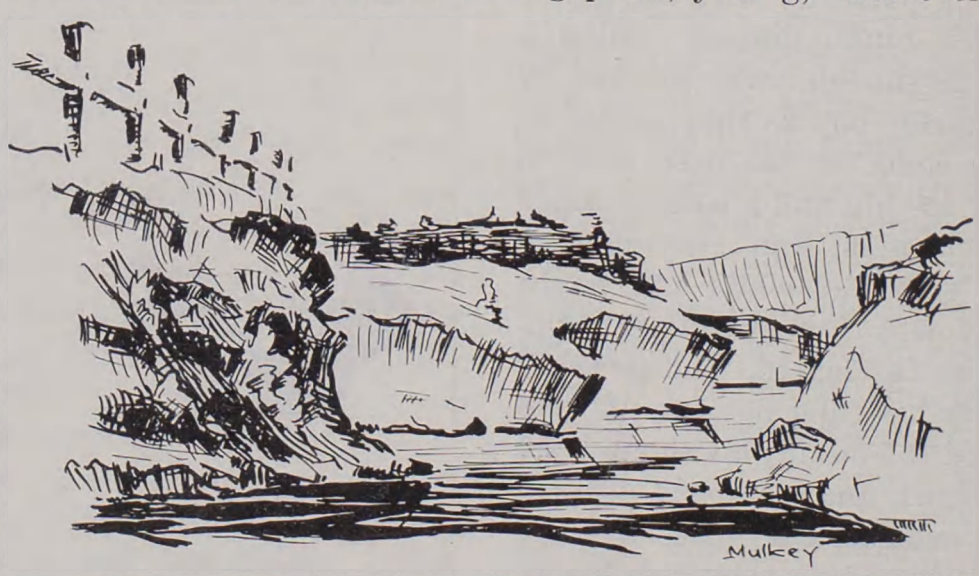
"Hey, look."

"What?"

Coming up the bank from the river, a slow figure was climbing patiently with the aid of a stick cane. Dell found himself behind a tree, aware that his shoulder was touched by the chin of the shorter boy as they looked at the man—a dirty man, an old man, clad in overalls that were too big and a white stained shirt, a strange old man, hair flowing long under a battered gray hat, white hair which mingled with a growth of beard under wrinkled eyes. Dell was fascinated. The stranger stopped to lean on his cane not far off and stared over toward the dump; his shadow lay on the ground, short and humped; a small wind stirred his whiskers a little, then he dragged his feet slowly over the trash heaps, which glinted at the sun. Dell heard a hiss at his shoulder, the pause, then, "Ah-ah-I seen that old guy before down here. He's crazy." Dell waited. "He threw rocks at me once, hit me on the leg, the old bastard." They saw the figure in the dump bend slowly, pick up something from the ground, then turn and shuffle, almost fast enough to be hurrying, straight toward them. Both boys caught their breath, moved closer to the tree, but the old man passed by without seeing them and made for an old car body which

rested, a gray hulk on the river bank, under the shade of the pines. Reaching it, he creaked one of the doors open and stiffly climbed in. Then they could see his profile through the back window of the car frame, as he gazed down intently at something in his hands, his lips moving. "Hey, what's he doin'?" Dell saw his friend's eyes under the roof of black hair studying, peering.

SOMETHING in the strangeness of the old man's appearance, his flowing hair and beard, his moving slips, attracted Dell and kept him silent as if speech would have broken some spell, some sympathetic agreement between himself, the big pines, the yellow river, and the old man's head. Yet he followed the other boy, who moved back up into the pines and circled, coming down directly behind the car body. Suddenly his friend turned, grabbed his arm, and whispered, "You go see what he's doin'." Dell looked at the ground, feeling his heart begin to beat heavy and fast, seeking some escape, but he could not speak. "What's the matter? You a-scared to?" He saw the boy's features hunch themselves into an expression unbelievably ugly. "You're just too big a chicken to do anything ain't ya?" Dell said nothing. "Ain't ya?"



Dell pulled his arm free, shrugged his shoulders and swallowed. He began to walk down the short slope to the car, aware of the sounds of heavy breathing behind him, and stopped close and crouched on the ground, not touching the car.

"Go ahead, go ahead."

He had to do something to stop the whisper. He glanced up at the back window, glanced back, then put his shaky hands on the jutting trunk of the old car, rose slowly and looked in.

HOW CLOSE the white head seemed! He was looking right over the old man's shoulder and could see that in his stained hands he held a comic book. Dell felt a tug at his pants. He dropped to the ground and whispered, "He's reading a funny book."

The boy stood up quickly and looked in the window. Dell was terribly afraid the old man would see him; then suddenly the boy ran around to the car door, opened it and crawled half inside. Dell cried, "No, no!" He saw the boy bend, pick up something, as the old man, surprised, sat up and fumbled for his cane. The boy thrust something into Dell's hands—a stack of comic books — and turned back again.

The old man struck out awkwardly with his cane, catching the boy a sidelong sweep across the face. The boy shouted, "You old bastard," and struck the old man with his fist, twice. The ancient's sunken mouth dropped with shock, and the boy grabbed another stack of comic books and ran for the big pines, yelling, "Come on, Dell," but Dell could not move. He stood, feeling the old man's wild, terrified eyes look through him, as if plumbing his spirit with awful recognition. The old man grunted, reached for the cane and began moving out of the car. Dell dropped the pile of books and ran pounding up the slope between the jagged pines.

He caught up with his friend on the road and walked slowly beside him in a slouch, feeling the burning sun on his head and back. The boy looked at the comic books, tossed each one away. Finally he said, "Hell, I seen 'em all." He sighed. "I sure wished I had some money. You got any?"

"No," said Dell. He could still see the old man's eyes.

Fool . . . Fool

by **KATHRYN HUDSON**

The park lights shook themselves from their daylight sleep and let their lazy glow settle around them and so shut the darkness from their cone-like worlds. A slight breeze carried an autumn smell of knotty wood and smouldering leaves and the vibrating song of a cricket serenaded an early star. From somewhere, high in a treetop, a squirrel laughed.

The soldier moved along the path from one cone of light to the next and wished that the yellow glow of park lights wasn't quite so lonely. Yet he liked them to be lonely, too, as a person likes to cry, because sometimes he finds comfort in a tear. But the soldier hadn't cried for a long time; maybe he felt that tears weren't enough to erase the bitterness that he'd felt for . . . how long was it . . . three years? Three years since he'd last heard a shell howl over his head and then bury itself deep in the ground with a thundering roar. Three years since the hungry Koreans' ugly dream of a world had welled up and reached even to him. Three years now since he had laughed and cried like other people.

His suit was new, but the "ruptured duck" on his lapel was enough to tell his story. He had burned his uniform and all the other relics that would remind him of the past. His face was reminder enough. A face . . . you can eat with it and sleep with it, but you can't hide it . . . can't clothe it. It hangs out where everyone can see it, where they can pass judgment over it, where they can like or dislike it . . . or feel sorry. The doctor had said that he was sorry . . . that sometimes surgery fails, that nothing can be done. Yes, the soldier liked lamplight for its sadness, its damned sadness.

He walked past each shadow, his heels echoing behind him, mocking the silence of the night. The lonely star had been joined, he noticed, by others and swallowed up by their company. He could see dimly the statue of General Lee up ahead, a concrete god of war, saluting an autumn sky, and a girl sat under a light near its feet, alone.

He watched her, but the lamplight played tricks with his eyes and kept her face hidden in the shadows. He sat on a bench and watched. She laughed and said something into the darkness. Then a large dog came out of the shadows and stood in front of her. She laughed at him again, and he lay down beside her. Lee, a girl, and a dog, he thought, that's what he'd come to see.

Behind him he heard a quartet singing lustily. He listened to the voices as they drifted down the walk.

> "Can anyone explain
> The thrill of a kiss?
> No, no, no."

The song went well with the night and with the shadows. The girl heard it, too, and was moved by it as she leaned back, intent on the singing and listened. The soldier watched her. As he listened to the song he thought of a girl, one he had never really seen, one who sat in the park at night by the statue of General Lee and thought of him. He remembered her first letter, gay, a little apologetic, and not quite able to hide that shade of loneliness that had awakened like a twang in his own feelings. "Would he write?" It was strange, but war had a way of breaking down the barriers of convention. She had gotten

Miss Hudson is a junior in Engish from Rapid City, South Dakota. She attended St. Olaf's University before coming to Montana State University.

his name through the Red Cross and thought it would be nice to have a soldier to write to. So he did write, and she wrote, and he wrote again. And the letters lost their loneliness and grew warm.

The singing was faint now:

"Can anyone explain
The thrill of romance?
No, no, no."

No, he couldn't explain it. How could he love a girl he'd never seen? Her picture was nice. He had liked to look at it as his ship sneaked through the waters of the Pacific. He'd thought of her when the mud sloshed against his boots, when rain clunked down on his helmet, when his buddy was killed, when he first saw his face in a hospital mirror. Explain it? No, no one could. But there it was, inside him.

The song drifted off somewhere and the park was lonely again. The soldier rose from the bench and walked slowly toward the statue. He wondered if she would be sorry too, about this first meeting, the plan they had laid out so carefully in their letters. He hadn't told her about his face. How could he? A voice within him laughed, mocking him. "She's no different from anyone else. Don't talk to her. Your face, you fool . . . you fool . . . you fool." Would his face make a difference? Almost before the thought was formed, another told him it would. He was close now, he could almost reach out and touch her; but he didn't. He walked past General Lee, past the girl, past the dog, and past his dreams of the future. The dog lifted his head and watched him, but the girl's eyes were unmoving, as though she paid no heed. After his heels clicked off and died in the hush of the night, the girl reached down for the dog's harness and he led her home through the darkness . . . as he had always done.

As the soldier walked down the lane, the yellow park lights glowed on their own little worlds, and a cricket serenaded a star, while the birds covered their eyes from the night, and, somewhere, high in a treetop den, a squirrel laughed.